

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

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A RED SISTER.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

WINTER set in early that year. Before the roaring east winds had finished sweeping avenue and byways of their autumn wreckage, the ice season was upon them : great jewels of icicles hung from slanting roofs and corniced windows, and frost spangles were flung galore over field and forest.

Lady Joan seemed to feel the cold this winter as she had never done before. She took no out-door exercise ; was never seen without some woollen wrap over her shoulders ; and shut herself up as much as possible in her boudoir, which she averred was the only warm room in the house.

Lady Honor, on the contrary, rejoiced in the keen, bracing air and iron-bound earth, which rang out a defiance to every step she put upon it, as young things in full health are apt to rejoice in all that sets the blood dancing. Her one lament was that there was no one to skate with, no one to slide with, no one to toboggan with. In fact, just then there appeared to be no one to do anything at all with. The society which the neighbourhood offered had never had much attraction for Lady Joan ; and her acquaintance with her neighbours had consequently been kept upon a strictly formal footing. A call at informal hours, a chance guest at breakfast or luncheon were things unknown at the Castle ; and, of necessity, entertainments of every sort were for the present tabooed to Lady Joan and her niece.

Lord Southmoor had returned to Devon, and was supposed to be preparing to take flight with his "Lily" to the South. A good deal of correspondence, however, appeared to be going on just then between him and Lady Joan, for every other day seemed to bring a letter with the Southmoor post-mark on it.

Lady Honor wondered over this as well as over one or two other matters. She had plenty of time for wondering. Deprived by the frost of her morning's wild gallop across country in company with Argus, having no taste for music, and ignoring utterly the existence of such tools as needles and thimbles, she had a great many spare moments on her hands. These she devoted in their entirety to minute observation of the details of the life being lived out beside her own.

"She doesn't know she's under a microscope, eh Argie, does she ?" she whispered as she fed the mastiff with the best of everything she could lay hands upon. "Time will show ; but if I don't read the riddle of the Sphinx, there's no one else will, take my word for it, Argie !"

In those early winter days, when Lady Joan was thrown so much upon her niece for society, slowly, but inevitably, it was borne in upon her mind that this girl, upon whom she had counted as a passive, if not active coadjutor in her plans, was a failure and a disappointment. "Give it a chance and blood must show," she had said to herself over and over again as she had tried to balance Lady Honor's numerous disadvantages of education against her name and her race. But assuredly "blood" was having every chance now under her own austere and stately rule, and yet Honor remained the untrained, defiant,

care-for-nothing damsels she had been from her cradle.

Nothing daunted her, nothing troubled her. The sternest of looks or of reprimands left as little mark upon her as rain upon a rivulet. Lady Joan, who had known so well how to freeze the boldest into silence with an "I beg your pardon," found herself more than once cowed and discomfited by one of Honor's steady, fixed looks from her bright, prominent eyes.

In spite of all this, however, Lady Joan found it impossible in a moment to give up the plans it had taken her so many years to mature. Let Honor be loud-voiced, disappointing, disconcerting as she might, she ranked infinitely higher in her estimation than the little nursery governess, with her face of child-angel and voice soft and musical as a woodland echo.

She lost no opportunity of rousing interest in Honor's mind in Herrick and his doings, and of setting before the girl, in a right light, this foolish trip of his across the Atlantic, and the foolish fancy which had occasioned it.

"I've had a line from Herrick—simply a line," she said, looking up from her correspondence at her niece, who sat facing her in a rocking-chair with a book in her hand.

"Indeed!" said Lady Honor, sharply, "he might have had the grace to write to me."

She felt a little piqued that the long letters she had taken such trouble to write had not had so much as an acknowledgement.

Lady Joan, not understanding, rejoiced in the thought that the cousins had reached a stage of friendliness in which correspondence might be expected of each other.

"He is in a disturbed state of mind, just now," she said, apologetically; "by-and-by, no doubt, he will settle down into his old self and do all that is expected of him. If you'll believe it, he is off to California now on his wild-goose chase!"

Lady Honor gave a great start. She fell back on her old form of expression. "Oh, what a fool he is!" she exclaimed brusquely, as before.

Lady Joan slightly frowned. The form of expression was not to her liking—the sentiment was.

"He has been befooled, I'll admit," she said, after a moment's pause; "but I've no doubt that by-and-by he'll return in a saner state of mind. It is better for him to have a lost journey than a ruined life."

"Aunt Joan," said Honor, suddenly fixing her round, prominent eyes full upon her aunt, "what makes you think that it will be a lost journey? Why shouldn't he find Lois White in her cousin's house in America?"

There could be no doubt about it, the question embarrassed Lady Joan. Her eyes drooped, her face clouded.

"It is a matter of common-sense," she said, after a moment's pause, "that an all but penniless girl is scarcely likely to undertake such a long and expensive journey at a moment's notice."

Then she took up her pen and began to write rapidly across one of the quarto sheets which lay before her.

Lady Honor, still eying her keenly, saw that her hand trembled slightly. "She knows where the girl is if any one in creation does," she said to herself as she pushed back her rocking-chair and walked lazily to the window, triumphant in the thought that she had given Aunt Jo a shock to her nerves, and resolute to repeat the operation on the first opportunity.

Acres of frosty grass, bare, brown-limbed trees—showing black against a leaden sky—met her eye. The only sign of life in the sunless, wintry landscape was the appearance of two men coming up the long avenue which led to the house.

One of the two she immediately recognised as a former visitor of Lady Joan's. His companion appeared to be a man about a dozen or so years older. His figure was narrow and sinuous, his face dark-skinned and lean.

"Here is Adam," she thought to herself. "I wonder if he's bringing the serpent with him." Aloud, she said: "Delightful! Aunt Joan, here are visitors. Oh, what a heavenly break in the day's monotony!"

Lady Joan frowned, but said nothing. Her pen steadily travelled over her quarto sheet. "Standards of Morality Compared and Differentiated," stood as the title of that sheet. Below she had started her essay with the words: "What is the criterion of a moral act?"

The answer to this question held a deeper interest for her than the coming of chance guests to the house to bore her with their commonplaces of sympathy or gossip.

Honor's steady, fixed eyes seemed to read her thoughts easily enough.

"Houses—castles especially—should be made with drawbridges, shouldn't they, Aunt Joan? Cards to be left on the other

side of the moat," she said, with the slightest possible touch of sarcasm in her tone.

"Dr. Gallagher and Mr. Harwood wish to see you, my lady," said a servant entering the room at that moment.

The expression on Lady Joan's face changed. She, however, carefully crossed her final "t" before she said, composedly:

"Honor, will you kindly take your book into another room? These persons have come to see me on business."

Lady Honor immediately vanished. She did not take her book with her, however, and, instead of retiring to the library or drawing-room, went straight to her own room, where she made an excuse for the attendance of the young girl who had been assigned to her as maid.

She thought she would like to know a little about this Dr. Gallagher and Mr. Harwood.

Amid a variety of directions as to dresses, ribbons, and hats, she put a few questions to the girl which elicited from her, in reply, the story of Lucy Harwood's short stay in the house, and of her sleep-walking propensities. A story which, with slight variations of detail, was now current in the household.

Lady Honor's curiosity was excited.

"Did any one see her walking about in her night-gown beside Lady Joan?" she asked. "I should love to see some one walking in their sleep in the dead of night."

Most ladies'-maids, thus catechised, would forthwith have begun to build a fabric of fiction on the foundation of fact. This one, lacking imagination, was truthful.

"I don't know, my lady. I've heard say that she walked into old Mr. Gaskell's sick-room in the dead of night; but I don't know if it was true. Mrs. Parsons, the old gentleman's attendant, or Mrs. Jervis, the sick nurse, could have told you; but they're neither of them here now."

"What has become of them?"

"Oh, my lady has been so kind to them. Mrs. Jervis had a son out in Australia, and wanted to go out to him; so my lady paid her passage out for her. And Mrs. Parsons had a nephew who wanted to open a big shop in the grocery line in Chester, and my lady has set him up there, and Mrs. Parsons lives with him. My lady has been goodness itself to every one who showed old Mr. Gaskell any kindness or attention."

Lady Honor felt puzzled. Her aunt's

conduct seemed to her more enigmatical than ever. "Goodness itself to every one who was kind to the old gentleman," she thought. "Yet father has more than once said that she had wished him out of the world for years! It is all a mystery together!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE short winter's day began to wane. Lady Honor bethought her of a certain letter which she had written, with all but frozen fingers that morning, before the fire in her room had been lighted, and which now reposed in her locked-up desk awaiting postage.

The two hours which intervened between afternoon tea and dressing for dinner were the hours she generally held sacred to the posting of these precious missives. Those two hours were more absolutely her own than any other in the day; for Lady Joan, as a rule, retired to her room after the tea-drinking was over, and Honor was left free for the two miles walk which landed her in the village post-office.

Lady Joan had specially requested her niece never to be seen outside the lodge gates unattended by her maid; and Lady Honor had forthwith made the discovery that long country walks were only delightful when undertaken with Argus for sole attendant.

Lady Joan hitherto had forbore to question Honor respecting those walks. She was ignorant of the steady correspondence which her niece carried on with her Belgian lover. M. van Zandt's existence had only been made known to her by the casual remark of Lord Southmoor's: that "A presumptuous Jackanapes of a drawing-master had presumed to make love to Honor; but, of course, it was all at an end now." Lady Honor's long, lonely walks to her mind simply represented a breach of the conventional; and, for the present, she shrank from a contention on the matter—a contention which, no doubt, Honor would have welcomed with keen delight.

"So far, Argus, I have paraded my muddy boots before her to no purpose; but, sooner or later, the storm must burst, and we shall have the opportunity of saying no end of sweet things to each other," said the girl as she and Argus, side by side, scampered down the lanes which lay rutted and frozen between high hedges sparsely powdered with light snow.

Argus had sadly plebeian tastes, and

owned to a good many canine friends among the village-bred lurchers and collies, and when, after posting her letter, Lady Honor started on her return journey, he was nowhere to be seen. She whistled and whistled in vain for him; then lost her temper over his bad manners, and informed the rutted ground and snow-powdered hedges that she would teach him a lesson and leave him to his fate.

The sun had gone down—a white-faced, miserable apology for the great golden globe of summer days—twilight was yielding rapidly to the denser shades of night when she reached the miniature pine wood which made the short cut from the high road to the Castle. The moon had not yet risen; never so much as one tiny silver star pierced the blackish-grey of the sky. The pines swayed a little in a gentle passing wind and waved their funereal plumes hither and thither as Lady Honor clambered over the rustic gate: to her way of thinking a far nicer way of entering the little wood than by lifting the latch and walking in. The bridle-path, cleanly swept by the gardeners every morning, showed whitely between two rows of trimly-cut Euonymus bushes grown to nearly a foot above her head.

It did not for a moment occur to the girl that it might have been wiser to have taken the longer road through the park to the Castle until the sound of footsteps and voices approaching attracted her attention.

"Gipsies, tramps, poachers. All three, perhaps," she said to herself. "Now, are they following the path, or are they careering here, there, everywhere under the pines?"

The steady, rapid pace at which the footsteps were approaching, answered her question. In the tangle of undergrowth which lay right and left of the cleanly-swept path, that regular ringing tread would have been an impossibility.

Full of the idea of tramps or vagabonds, Lady Honor took advantage of a break in the hedge, and slipped out of the path into the tangle beneath the pines.

She congratulated herself that her dress was a black one. "If only my hair matched it!" she sighed. "It will shine out like fireflies in the dark. I rather wish Argus were here, he'd help me to save my watch."

But the next moment found her thanking Heaven that Argus was not there to betray her with his loud challenging "who goes there?" bark, for strange words fell

upon her ear—words so strange, indeed, that she held in her breath and shrank behind the biggest pine-trunk she could find in order that not one of them should be lost to her.

"What on earth are you in the dumps about, man?" said an olesginous voice, which Lady Honor felt sure must belong to the dark-skinned man whom, in a moment of inspiration, she had dubbed "the serpent," and who had been announced to Lady Joan as Dr. Gallagher. "This is a capital world to live in if only one knows how to manage one's affairs. Cheer up! cheer up! Everything is going splendidly!"

"Splendidly do you call it?" replied the other, whom it was easy to identify as Ralph Harwood. "Villainously would be a better word. I've never before played cat's-paw to man or woman, and I wish to Heaven I had let myself go into the workhouse rather than—"

"Oh, if you're going to be religious, and invoke Heaven," interrupted the other, the oil in his voice giving place to a pronounced sneer, "kneel down and thank Heaven for the golden chance that has come in your way. Why, my friend, the lady is as free with her fifty-pound notes as other people are with their fives!"

"I wish to goodness they had never come in my way," said Ralph, gloomily. "Why couldn't she get some one else to do her bidding? Why does she persist in throwing her gold at me in the way she does?"

The men were now abreast of Lady Honor in her hiding-place. A sudden determination came to her. These men had been closeted with Lady Joan for hours, and were no doubt in her confidence. Here, perhaps, was a golden chance of getting a clue to the secret for which Herrick was hunting the other hemisphere. Softly she crept out of her hiding-place, and as the men passed along, step by step, her tread followed theirs.

Only the thick Euonymus hedge divided her from them; their words fell clear and distinct upon her ear.

"I take it," said Gallagher, "that the lady hasn't always had the chance of flinging gold about in this fashion, and that's perhaps why she's a little free with it now. She's a splendid woman—a most interesting case I should have called her if I had come upon her, in the old days, in one of the asylums—a little difficult to understand at first, perhaps; but a keen pair of eyes like

mine will read her through and through before they've done with her."

"If your eyes are so keen, I wish to goodness you'd tell me what makes her take so violent an interest in me and mine. It is out of all reason to volunteer as she does to provide for my sister for life."

"Gently, my friend, you go too fast. She will provide for her only so long as she is treated as a semi-lunatic; in other words she makes it to your interest and mine to stamp her as such."

"Of course, so far as Miss White is concerned," went on Ralph, "it is easy enough to understand why she should wish to hide her in a convent. I've heard lately that it was the talk of the place that young Mr. Gaskell wanted to marry her."

Lady Honor's heart was beating wildly now. Here was a revelation! She began impetuously to thank Heaven that the plot was laid bare to her before it was too late to frustrate it.

"Let me see," said the other, "when did the novitiate begin — on the twentieth of last month was it?"

Lady Honor's heart stood still. She ceased to thank Heaven. The novitiate begun! Alas, alas! for Herrick's hopes. Lady Joan might almost cry victory now.

"On the twentieth of last month, yes," answered Ralph, "and a strict novitiate it is too. In all respects similar to the life of the fully professed nun — perpetual enclosure, no communication whatever with the outer world. Not even deeds of charity are allowed; it is all contemplation and prayer. Great Heavens! How can the women endure it! I'd sooner lie down in my grave at once than become a Red Sister."

"Oh, well, that's their look-out, isn't it? She went in willingly enough, didn't she?"

"Willingly! She was only too thankful to be admitted. The father would never have allowed her to be driven in."

"What's her name in religion, by the way? It's just as well I should know," asked Gallagher.

"Sister Héloïse. Not that it matters much to anybody what her name is! In these strict orders the novice is as dead to the world as the nun."

This was not to be all that Honor was to hear that night. This wily, dark-skinned Gallagher, whose every sentence she felt ought to end in a hiss, was to be the first to put into plain words the thought which had been lying in her heart for weeks past.

"I say, Ralph," he said, in a knowing

tone, "it strikes me this Lady Joan has something on her mind; her manner gives one that impression. On her conscience, I should say, if I had not long ago come to the conclusion that conscience was nothing more than prejudices for or against certain social conventions, transmitted in a straight line from father to son."

"I don't know about what she has on her conscience, I know she has put something on mine——"

"Tush, man, don't whine!" interrupted Gallagher, the oiliness in his voice having given place now to a more natural, if rougher intonation. "This woman is to me a most interesting psychological study. Depend upon it, before I've done with her, I shall read her as easily—well, as I've read the score or so of patients who've passed through my hands."

They had now reached a point in the bridle-path where the pines were less closely planted, and where the Euonymus hedge was considerably lower. Lady Honor dared not venture farther, the risk of detection was too great. So the men walked on ahead, free from her espionage. Though she strained her ears to the utmost, only a half-sentence of Gallagher's reached them. It was:

"For one thing, whether by fair means or foul, young Mr. Gaskell must be kept out of the way. If he comes upon the scene, he'll be sure to spoil sport."

And a minute after, together with the creak of the little rustic gate which led into the high road, she could hear Ralph saying, in hard, bitter tones:

"Yes, I suppose you're right; there's no going back for me now."

ABOUT HOPS.

A PUBLIC life in the county of Kent for twenty years, in which one moved among farmers and hop-growers, large and small, mixing with them in a familiar way, and making a point of going about in and among the hop-gardens year by year, ought to qualify one to say something about the matter, unless both ears and eyes have been closed to what was to be heard and seen, which, I beg leave to say, was not the case.

The hop is said to belong to the same family as the hemp and nettle, and is a native of Europe; but has been introduced into the United States, where, in the more settled parts, as in England, it grows wild. It seems, however, not to be a

native of the British Isles ; that is, if there be any truth in the old ditty, that

Hops, malt, pickerel, and beer
Came into England all in one year.

If we drop the pickerel, or young pike, there can be little doubt as to the association of the other three, whatever may be said as to their advent. Are we not told that hops "are employed to communicate to beer its aromatic bitter" ? So, at least, it should be. It is rather a suggestive fact, however, that though the consumption of beer and ale is rather on the increase than otherwise, the area of land under hops, and the annual yield, is on the decrease. Products of the hop, however, and the hop as cured for brewing purposes, are rather largely employed in medicine, as a tonic, a sudorific, and a sedative. As to its potency as a tonic, one need only ask any hop-picker, and he will at once learn that "in the districts where the plant is cultivated," the hopping "is looked forward to as a cure for many ordinary complaints, the air being full of the aroma of the hop;" and the hands of the picker, which, whether he be a Pharisee or not, he has little opportunity of washing before meat, are so begrimed with the pollen, or farina, or lupulin of the hop commonly called "gold-dust," from its resemblance to that precious metal, that a good deal of it is necessarily swallowed with the food for which the healthy employment gives an eager appetite. The medicinal effects of beer, especially old ale, taken hot on going to bed, are well known. If ginger and sugar are added, a cold may in this way be "sweated" out of one.

As is known everywhere, Kent stands first as a hop-growing county ; next to Kent comes Sussex, then—but I am not sure as to the order of their importance—Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Surrey, about Farnham. I have seen them in all these places, excepting Farnham ; but my chief acquaintance with the hop is as it is grown in Kent. There are three districts : East Kent, Mid-Kent, and the Weald of Kent. They stand in the order I have named them. The East Kent division is east of a line from the sea to the mouth of the Thames, passing near Faversham and West of Canterbury. Canterbury is the centre ; but the district extends eastward to Sandwich and to a line running south towards Folkestone. The Mid-Kent district has Maidstone for its centre, and some of the best gardens in it are in or near the valley of the Medway, between Maidstone and Tunbridge. The Weald comprises all the other parts of

Kent, of which Cranbrook may be regarded as the centre, and embracing all the other parishes whose names end in "den," or "hurst," as Hawkhurst and Staplehurst, Goudhurst, Benenden, Horsmonden, etc. A few other parishes with the names ending in "ley" must also be included, as Brenchley, Pluckley, etc. The hop-growing districts in Sussex are more or less contiguous to those of the Weald of Kent, and the soil is similar in character ; although Sussex hops take a lower place than those of the Weald of Kent. I have known a garden in the same parish, part of which was in Kent and part in Sussex, and the hops grown in the different counties had to be differently marked.

During the former part of my acquaintance with hop culture, there was a heavy duty payable, equal to almost a pound per hundredweight. It had to be paid whether the hops were sold or not, in two instalments ; and when the crop was heavy, this was a great burden to the grower. I have heard of twenty-eight hundredweight being grown to the acre, and I have many times seen considerably more than a ton to the acre. If a man had thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred acres of hops, it was a very serious item. I knew by name a man who had three hundred acres. Look for a moment what an outlay would be involved. First, each acre would cost on an average twenty pounds for cultivation, including poles ; then would come picking, drying, and packing, representing so much ready money. Say a man had fifty acres, and he grew forty tons of hops ; the outlay in ready money would be, in plain figures, about twenty-five pounds per acre, equal to one thousand two hundred and fifty pounds, to which must be added duty amounting to seven hundred and sixty pounds. Rent and taxes, at three pounds per acre, would be one hundred and fifty pounds. And the extra tithe would be nearly another fifty pounds —say fifty pounds—making a total outlay of two thousand two hundred and ten pounds. I have frequently known hops as low as two pounds ten shillings per hundredweight, which would produce, when sold, two thousand pounds, leaving a balance on the wrong side of two hundred and ten pounds. But very frequently the hops could not be sold, except at a lower price ; and as duty must be paid at a certain date, things went rather hard with the grower, especially if he were in the hands of a merchant or factor, and had not a balance on the right

side at the bank. The best thing for the growers was half a crop all round. The duty and expenses of picking and curing would be only one half, and the price double, treble, or even quadruple. The only better thing in the case of an individual grower would be when he had twelve or fifteen hundredweight to the acre, when the average was only five or six. I have known hops to sell at twenty-five pounds per hundredweight in October, and the same class of hops hardly fetch five pounds in March following.

I knew a man—I should not like to call him a friend, though I had a great deal to do with him at times, and suffered much annoyance from him—who had a small farm of less than eighty acres, at forty pounds per annum rent, sixteen acres being hops. In the year 1853, his sixteen acres of hops yielded a crop which produced him two thousand and fifty pounds. It was his ruin. Instead of putting three parts of it away, he began to live at an extraordinary rate of extravagance, as if every year was to be equally abundant. In three, or at most four, he was insolvent, and became a nuisance to his brothers, who were honourable men, and a ceaseless worry to several other persons, the writer included. And yet that man's father was at one time a wealthy man. But he did not act as his foolish son did; he worked hard, and was careful and steady.

It would be considered "infra dig." in these days for a farmer to be his own hop-dryer; but old J—— W—— was when a young man. And what is more, he has been known to dry hops all the week, night and day, go to his chapel on Sunday, start off in the evening, and walk thirty-eight miles to London—there was neither railway nor stage-coach—sell his hops from the samples he had carried with him, and then walk back, ready for the drying on Monday evening. I knew the old man well and intimately forty years ago.

The same old gentleman bought a farm of twenty acres, contiguous to the one he rented, but the title could not be passed, so he continued to rent it. After his death, his eldest son—not the foolish man before mentioned—bought it, and threw it into a single hop-garden, grubbing all the hedges and levelling all the banks. He paid a good price for it, for the title was secure; but it cost him as much or more to drain it throughout, plant it with hops, and work it in view of a crop. He would want from forty-eight thousand to sixty thousand

poles to furnish it, and then, after all that outlay, the first year the crop was nil, as the garden was blighted throughout. But my friend—I always think of him as a friend, for such he was—had not put all his eggs into one basket, so he could wait. The next year many had their hops blighted; but he had a fair crop in that garden, and, as the prices were good, he realised nearly or quite the whole of his outlay—purchase, draining, planting, polling, etc.

I knew a farm very well at Yalding, in Mid-Kent. The farmer died while in middle life. His widow thought she would give up the farm, as the rent for two hundred acres was eight hundred pounds per annum. All arrangements were made for the transfer of the property to another tenant, and the time and place were fixed for her to sign over. Somehow, when the time came, and she met the parties at the office of the lawyer, she said she had altered her mind; she would keep it on another year, and see what the "widow's year" would produce. The result was that she had a good crop, sold at good prices, and came out of the farm seven thousand and ten pounds better off than if she had carried out her original intentions. In this case second thoughts were best. A friend of mine took the farm of her, and the amount sunk in taking and carrying on for the first year reached nearly eight thousand pounds. The item of about two hundred thousand poles, some of them fourteen feet high, would run into money.

Rather more than thirty years ago, a new kind of hop came up. There were already Jones's, Colegate's, Grape, Golden Drop, etc.; and now was added Brenchley Prolific. Another of my friends made a good thing of it, and he was worthy of success, for he was as good as he was big, and one of the kindest men I have ever met with. His father had noticed a hill of hops rather more forward than the rest. He marked that hill, and propagated from the root, and soon after his death his son had got a nice bit of ground behind his house planted from the original stock. The hops were early, and obtained the prize in the Borough, as the very first. The papers made it known, and then everybody wanted some sets. My friend cultivated them for sale, and sold them by auction at the time for planting. I remember his showing me a quarter of an acre piece planted with "sets" of this new and prolific hop—for the crop was

abundant as well as early—and when the sale came, that quarter of an acre paid him five hundred pounds.

Another friend of mine bought some and planted them in a choice piece of ground he had bought; and I remember his telling me that the hop-sets he planted in the garden cost more than the land.

It is well known that hops are an uncertain crop; they are like eels, and like slippery sort of people, you never know when you have got them. Hops may look to be thriving, and really be thriving; but that may be their ruin. The mould comes, and they are next to worthless. There is a certain little fly, too, which is very injurious; it preys upon the bine and young shoots, and blasts the farmer's hopes. I have seen one of these flies caught, put into a box, and posted to London to some merchant or factor; and soon the report went the round of the papers and the local markets—"Fly in the hop! fly in the hop!" But the fly has an enemy, before which he is made to fly, or else is preyed on to his destruction. That enemy is the rather pretty insect, called in Kent the lady-cow, and in most other places the lady-bird. It is well known everywhere; but I never saw so many as I have seen in Kent. The farmers hail their advent with delight, for there is then an end of the fly, if it has made its appearance, and physical certainty that the lady-cow will hold the garden against him. Where these lady-cows, or rather lady-birds, come from I cannot say, but I once witnessed a strange phenomenon when on the Admiralty Pier at Dover; for the lady-birds were literally rained down upon the floor of the pier, so that you could not step without crushing them. There were legions upon legions of them. Wherever they came from, they were doubtless bound for the hop districts, where they would be hailed as a god-send, as doubtless they were.

It has been implied that the cultivation of the hop is costly; and such is the case. To begin with the soil, you must have ground fairly good; not too stiff, not too light; and the deeper the super-soil the better, for hops root down from year to year. A clay sub-soil will help to keep the surface cool in a dry summer; but if the season be wet—as there is no opportunity for the water to percolate—the surface soil is kept wet and cold, and the hop shows a sickly aspect. Hence the need and benefit of draining. The old plan was

to dig trenches, and throw in bushes, which, of course, would rot in time, and would have to be renewed. The almost invariable plan now is to use tiles. There are men well skilled in this work. They dig out a trench from four to six feet deep, and lay in the pipes on a proper incline, so that the water can be carried off; and in the Weald of Kent and Sussex, where this is most needful, there is little difficulty in getting a sufficient fall. The neatness and dexterity with which the drainers do their work is worth seeing, and they deserve credit for their painstaking. They are commonly well paid, as they deserve. In a wet season, you can see to a yard where there are drains or otherwise. Usually, the landlord finds the drain-pipes, and the tenant puts them in; or, if the landlord pays for labour, the tenant pays a percentage on the outlay.

A hop-garden—such enclosures are called "yards" in Herefordshire—is a pretty sight, when the plant is in full growth, and especially when approaching maturity. The "hills," or "crowns," are six feet apart, and run in lines every way, so that there are twelve hundred hills to each acre of land enclosed. Each hill requires two, three, or four poles, the length of which varies, according to the sort of hop, from ten to sixteen feet, and costs from five to thirty shillings per hundred, according to length, and as they are of alder, dwarf-oak, ash, chestnut, or larch. Larch are the dearest, but most lasting. A plan has obtained wide use, however, by which the softer and cheaper poles, such as alder, are made durable by being dipped in creosote, which answers very well. The plan of using short poles with strings passing horizontally from one to another does not answer well.

If a garden is planted with "bedded sets"—that is, sets that were cut the year before, and planted in a bed or nursery to strengthen—they will, especially if the season be favourable, produce the first year, though not a large crop. If "cut sets" are used—that is, sets cut off in the spring, and at once planted out to form a garden—there will be only a handful here and there. We begin, therefore, with the second year. Late in March, or early in April, the hills must be "opened" and "dressed." The former process explains itself, and the latter means the cutting away of what remains of the last year's shoots or bine. This is important; for, first, these form the "sets" for propaga-

tion ; and, second, the new bine will spring, not weak and puny from the bottom of the old bines, but strong and vigorous from the "stool" or "crown" itself. Before this process, however, the garden has been dug over with a fork to the depth of eight or ten inches. This finds work for the men during any open weather between November and March. The men are paid per hundred hills ; and strong and dexterous workmen can earn a pound a week, without making very long days. Occasionally you see a hop-garden ploughed ; but that neither is, nor looks, so well as the other method, and is generally regarded as a snobbish method.

After dressing comes polling. This is often done at per acre. The wife can then lay out the poles, while the husband makes the holes with a heavy iron instrument, called a hop-pitcher, and sets and fastens the poles. The next process is hop-tying, which is done by women at per acre. The weaker shoots must be cut off, and one, two, or more of the stronger tied to the poles with rushes, which the tier has secured in some wet meadow or roadside, and harvested to make them tough. The woman must go over her "taking" again and again, cutting out broken bines and introducing others, until they are out of her reach. Men then take them in hand, using a kind of rough ladder, until they reach the top.

From this time the surface of the soil in the "alleys" should be kept "hove," and free from weeds, by frequent niggetting—a nigget being an implement very much like a bean-brake, with narrow iron tines or hoes. This is needful to let in the sun, to keep the soil from crusting over, and give the myriads of rootlets an opportunity to derive all they can of nutriment, air, and moisture, and thus keep the plants in vigorous growth. I have seen, times without number, the soil turned up by the nigget, or the farmer's spud, and countless rootlets laid bare, which will immediately yield fresh ones, so that the channels for nutriment to the plants in a well-cultivated garden are multitudinous.

PHASES OF COURAGE.

COURAGE, of the loud, self-heralding kind, is not a property of civilised life. The astute, prudent, far-seeing man thrives vastly better among his fellow men, in the calm decades of modern European existence,

than the man who is ready at a moment's summons to declare his fearlessness, his contempt for whatever threatens his body's welfare, his disregard for the common instincts of self-preservation. Indeed, so far from gaining from his fellow men anything like the regard that would have been his lot in the old days, when the hero was as a god, one is prone to suspect that in these times the man whose blood is hot with desire to do deeds that shall shine "like a candle in a naughty world," and whose mind is in sympathy with his blood, is devoid of ordinary restraint and prudence, and is like to become a laughing-stock and a dupe to his contemporaries.

We have abundance of courage still current among us ; but it is a more refined courage than the old. It is innate within us, as of yore ; but hedged about with such thorny cautions and hindrances that it has not a chance of free breath and movement, unless it consent to put off its original radiant apparel, which all eyes must see, and go about in a disguise which often is so effectual that no man can see through it. Worse still, in some of us, the virtue so chafes at the fetters which are set upon it by the hands of convention, that it makes a sort of bargain with the vices which the world allows us to air with entire liberty. Under cover of this compact it gets abroad. But the bargain is a hard one. The vices to which it has perforce enchain'd itself seem wholly to transmute it. You would never recognise it as the motive force of the ruin of this or that reckless rake. It is so, nevertheless.

No doubt a good deal of courage of the old kind did not deserve the esteem with which it was viewed. Corporal Smith, in the Napoleonic era, must often have smiled in his heart at the simplicity of his friends and acquaintances who welcomed him back to his native village with such elegant tokens of admiration. To be sure, he was a Corporal ; and it was currently believed that he had gained his rank by the exhibition of qualities the most heroic. It is quite likely, indeed, that in process of time the Corporal himself would come to have this opinion about himself—so marvellously contagious is the voice of Rumour. But at the outset he knows better. He knows only too well that he was ready to scream with fright when those awful French dragoons rushed upon the battalion with a dazzling glitter of sword-blades and a shout of "Vive" something, that curdled his marrow. Had there been an opening for

escape he would certainly have made for it; but none such existed. To retreat would have been to impale himself on the bayonet of his comrade Brown—poor Brown who had his head cloven by one of the glittering swords; to run forward, even at the top of his speed, would only have been an anticipation of the doom that menaced him. And so, worthy fellow, he stood still, with a grim clutch of his gun, and shut his eyes and trembled until the charge was done. For this behaviour—because many of the non-commissioned officers had bitten the dust, and because also he chanced to be a survivor—Smith was made a Corporal.

This is not said in disparagement either of Corporal Smith or the profession of arms in general. Rather, it seems wise to declare it, if only that we civilians may not play the ignoramus in blind adoration of the redcoat. Had Corporal Smith felt otherwise than he did feel, he would have been a man of no common order. Nor is it anything in opposition if, at the next engagement, he showed conduct strikingly different from his conduct in the former battle. For it is in fighting, as in everything else, practice makes less imperfect. Unconsciously arguing from analogy, the Corporal realises that he has always a fair, indeed, a very fair chance, of escaping from a battle-field unharmed.

The words of a man who has lived for more than forty years among the Maoris of New Zealand are, upon this subject, likely to be of some interest and value; for his connections with the race were so fundamental, that he had a quite uncommon opportunity of estimating the motives that made them act with such vigorous disregard for personal safety when a battle was afoot.

Our author begins by denying the existence of courage in its unalloyed state. He substitutes a quality which, somewhat clumsily, he is obliged to term merely the "appearance of courage." It is by help of this, he says, that men "do the most heroic actions, being all the time ready to die of mere fright, but keeping up a good countenance all the time. Here is the secret: Pay attention; it is worth much money. If ever you get into any desperate battle or skirmish, and feel in such a state of mortal fear that you almost wish to be shot to get rid of it, just say to yourself, 'If I am so preciously frightened, what must the other fellows be?' The thought will refresh you. Your own self-esteem

will answer that, of course, the enemy is more frightened than you are; consequently, the nearer you feel to running away, the more reason you have to stand. Look at the last 'Gazette' of the last victory, where thousands of men, at one shilling per diem, minus certain very serious deductions, 'covered themselves with glory.' The thing is clear. The other fellows ran first. And that is all about it."

Perhaps our white Maori—himself a very brave fellow, and, therefore, prone to depreciate the quality of valour in others as well as in himself—here oversteps the mark a little. One is at any rate loth to take him literally. Still, the principle is, as he suggests, likely to be based on a sufficiency of fact; and in default of nobler stimulants, the private of Her Majesty's, or any other army, may be counselled to invigorate his spirits, on the eve of an action, with some such fancy as this.

Turn now to our most successful living General, and interrogate him about this matter.

"Is courage, Lord Wolseley, a special gift for which a man may render thanks to Heaven in being thus sent into the world with a stouter equipment than his fellows?"

The General's answer is admirably to the point:

"I regard courage," he says, "as the mental correlative and equivalent of perfect physical health. And my experience has taught me that high courage is generally accompanied by bodily soundness."

There is the sense of the century in this definition. Courage has nothing transcendental about it. Rather, it is beefsteak, and beer, and exercise in metempsychosis. Reduce a man's rations, and you lower the standard of his valour. Feed him on rice instead of beefsteak, and perchance the first blare of the enemy's trumpets will make him throw out his heels. Think not that deeds of courage, like true poetry, can proceed only from the exceptions among men. It may be built as precisely, and with the same amount of system, as a house. To transform a coward into a brave man, you have only to take a half-starved denizen of a city, give him regular meals, make him stand alternately first upon one foot, and then upon the other, for an hour or two at a time, day after day, and put a musket into his hands, and cry, "Up, my man, and at them!" Conversely, the brave man may be precipitated

into a coward by a course of starvation. This is very rational; but it does not satisfy. It begins, or seems to begin, upon the basis that courage is even more exotic among us than, in one's most cynical moments, one is disposed to fancy. It denies that "Stoicism of the blood" which, to common eyes, has been in existence ever since men acquired the habit of reciting to each other the great things done by their brethren and forefathers, and which has certainly often acted independently of the dinner-plate.

Still, as a definition of courage in the average man, Lord Wolseley's words need not be derided. With him it may, or it may not be, an acquired taste, like olives and oysters. Lord Wolseley, however, is in the same case as the white Maori. Having himself given unquestionable proof of his own courage, he can afford to cheapen the virtue which no one will venture to say is lacking in him.

In contrast with the seasoned soldier, let the man of letters, pure and simple, proffer a word: the being, perhaps, of all men, most in opposition to the warrior. The latter serves his country with his hand, whereas the former devotes himself to mankind through his head.

"Courage," says Addison, "that grows from constitution, often forsakes a man when he has occasion for it. Courage which arises from a sense of duty, acts in a uniform manner."

Is this as sound a saying as it appears to be? It is a pitting of body against mind, in which the victory is adjudged to mind. This is precisely the issue one would expect when a man like Addison sits upon the bench. Himself conscientious in a high degree, he would be as apt to think conscience omnipotent in all occasions as the man whose view of life is largely material would be disposed to ascribe courage to beefsteaks, and the affection of melancholy to a disturbance of the liver.

Lord Bacon seems, in a measure, to have the same estimate of courage that Addison professes. As a sedentary man, he regards audacity with no favourable eyes. It is an infraction of the great law of regularity and monotony, which is so welcome to the person to whom routine has become as endeared as an old book.

"To men of great judgement," he says—and none need be in doubt as to the oblique application of this phrase to himself—"bold persons are a sport to behold; nay, and to the vulgar, also, boldness hath some-

what of the ridiculous; for if absurdity be the subject of laughter, doubt you not but great boldness is seldom without some absurdity."

The great Baron was enlightened much above his contemporaries. He of the sixteenth century was a fit peer for us of the nineteenth. This may not seem praise of a surpassing kind; but to take the measure of it, think for a moment what figure you or I would be likely to cut, if we were held, body and soul, in suspense for three centuries, and then set down among our descendants of a tenth generation, in A.D. 2200. His lordship's reading of exceeding boldness is much the same as our contemporaries' reading of it. And his lordship—alas for him—cultivated in his own person those other qualities of astuteness and the wisdom of the serpent—which may almost be said to be the opposite of physical courage—with such refinement that he sinned against the virtue of honesty.

Great boldness seldom without some absurdity! Why, yes, to be sure, it is likely thus to be attended.

The audacious man is insensible to the many arguments which would deter his more prudent friend from doing what he does. He goes headlong, and does not count the cost. Or his meteor-like progress is the consequence of a hurried reckoning of "for" and "against," in which the balance swings unmistakeably in favour of action.

Such audacity is a challenge to the Fates themselves. The man wearies, it maybe, of the tame, colourless threads of his life, spun forth, inch by inch, under his nose, and the nature of which he perceives half a mile in advance. He snaps the dull fibres, and goes forth at a tangent. It will be kill or cure with him. Perhaps, as a rule, he pays the penalty for his rashness. "Boldness is ever blind, for it seeth not danger and inconveniences." But when he triumphs, he meets with his reward.

It requires some courage to confess oneself a coward upon occasion. Think of the British officer of whom Lord Wolseley has told us, who, one day, disgraced himself by skulking in the face of the enemy. We can only surmise how he came to yield himself up to his inclinations in so shameful a way. His was a temptation others have been confronted with, and have resisted. But he was weaker in body or mind than the majority, and hence his ruin. Yet, the confession of his weakness

were afeat of courage as great almost as any his fellow officers were likely to do in the battle-field that day.

As we have said, the courage of ordinary individuals in ordinary civil life is of so adulterate a kind that it can by no means be discerned by the naked eye. It is easier to judge of the spirit of Corporal Smith when you see him face to face with the foe than to judge in like manner about the heroism of your neighbour. Yet it is not so easy to pass judgement even on Corporal Smith as it seems to be. What do you know of the conflicts in the minds of the men and women you pass and repass daily in the street? They do not carry swords and pistols, and offer challenges to all comers. Nevertheless, their spirit is as much tried as if they did thus play the braggart before all the world.

Little Peter Macfir, who whistles in the high street of his native village on the Sabbath, shows courage of a kind; and especially he swells his note when he passes the house of the Elder. He shows courage of another kind when he bites his tongue that he may not utter an unmanly scream while his wrathful papa, on the Monday, gives him at the Elder's instigation a substantial flogging.

This is a small matter. But having once testified of the spirit within him, it is not wonderful if little Peter, when he becomes a man, does great things, such as come in the way of the civilian: "For courage mounteth with occasion." He may have the courage of his opinions—a most serious responsibility anywhere; but peculiarly serious in his native hamlet where, if the Elder said Mrs. Macfir's favourite hen was a cock, one were bold, even on the witness of its eggs, to insist upon the feminine gender. The man who has the courage of his opinions, and, at the prompting of his better nature, gives them air, need not envy the soldier who gains promotion for his bravery in battle.

The martyrdom of social life, under certain conditions, generates among us men and women whose sufferings for noble ends are more respectable even than those of the martyrs who died for their faith, and so, by one short, if lingering hour of pain, passed to a blissful Paradise. A husband, or a wife, whose partner in life is, let us say, a drunkard, dies daily. It is courage of the first water, if the person who is reviled does not revile back; and the man or woman who, spite of malediction and ill-usage, devotes a life to the reclaiming of

the sinner from the error of his or her ways, can afford to reject a diploma of canonisation.

There is assuredly not less courage among us than in the old days; but it minglest with our other attributes as it never did then. A story is told of the Ross-shire minister, Charley Calder. His wife one day "found him in an agony of fear, lying on his study floor, at the hour for beginning the service in the church. 'Oh, why was I ever a minister?' he cried, as she entered. 'I should have been a tradesman rather.' 'My dear, the Lord knew that you had not strength for a tradesman's work,' was his wife's wise reply."

We cultivate most those faculties in us which are most exercised by the nature of our calling. Not all of us could, offhand, play the hero in the field of battle; but the hearth and the market-place give us opportunities just as admirable.

YACHTING IN STILL WATERS.

SECOND SERIES.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART IV.

Few people steaming swiftly up Southampton Water in these days ever turn aside to visit the Hamble river. Life has deserted it for the busy, toiling quays of Southampton. The very natives, with their broad, Hampshire drawl, and slow apprehension, are a hundred years behind the world. Yet the Norse rovers, Jute pirates, and, later still, the bold Danish marauders in the ninth century, all of them no bad judges of a safe and easily accessible haven, cast eyes of favour upon the Hamble river; and not upon the entrance merely, their strong little galleys being safely navigated up the five miles of winding river to Botley, where the stream comes to an end in a reedy ditch. It was at Bursledon, where the Hamble is now spanned by the railway bridge, that one of the Danish galleys was put into quarantine, and afterwards sunk in the mud of the river, on account of the virulent nature of the plague from which the bold Vikings were suffering. This galley, with the remains of red and blue paint still visible upon her timbers, after lying in the preservative mud for a thousand years, was only dug out and exposed to view in 1882. Old chronicles assert that the Danes, from the safe anchorage in Hamble river, pounced out upon the luckless trader going up channel

inside the Wight, and became at once the admiration and terror of all peaceable folk. Black, in his Guide to Hampshire, says that the Hamble is one of the oldest known rivers in the kingdom, and is the Flumen Homelea mentioned by the Venerable Bede, an ancient English monk and writer, who died in 735. It is supposed that Cerdic and his son Cynric landed at the head of the river, at Botley, in all probability, in 498, on their way to Winchester, where they formed the first West Saxon settlement. Here, too, Stuf and Whitgar, the Jute pirates, and their crews, disembarked in 514.

The same authority says, "In Leland's time, Hamble was a good fisher town, with a haven, wherein is a very faire rode for great shippes." Leland may be called the father of English antiquaries; born in the end of Henry the Seventh's reign, he must have been a man of singular talent. Educated at both Oxford and Cambridge—a distinction shared with the Prince of Wales of our day, and Lord Stratheden and Campbell—he became librarian to Henry the Eighth, who, between the intervals of conjugal changes, seems to have greatly fostered art, literature, and warlike preparations. Leland spent six years in Henry's service, collecting materials for his "History of English Antiquities"; but "much learning having made him mad," he died, leaving his valuable works unfinished. They are well preserved in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford. Unless Hamble is much changed, Leland had a curious idea of a suitable anchorage "for great shippes," a hundred-ton yacht having a tight squeeze when working up the river with a foul wind.

In the reigns of William and Mary, and of Queen Anne, a Government shipbuilding yard existed at Bursledon, where two-deckers were built for the navy, from the enormous trees grown in the oak copse at Botley. In ancient charts, the little village, which gives its name to the river, is called Hamble-le-rice, and is far older than the opposite hamlet of Warsash. When entering from the Solent, the overlap of two points gives little indication of a river branching off to the right. A red buoy on one hand, and a T-headed pole on the other, mark the entrance with sufficient clearness while there is any light; if entering after dark, you had better anchor outside, and wait till day.

The Hook, Mr. Hornby's beautiful place, built by his ancestor, "Governor" Hornby,

a hundred years ago, now opens its grand frontage of pillars, and colonnades on the starboard hand, between aisles of lovely old elms and pines, with its own creek and landing-place, marked by a forest of booms, leading up to a little bare boat-house on the shingle. A staring, red-brick coast-guard station, perched on the hill above, is a great improvement upon the ancient mortar vessel, built in haste during the Crimean War, formerly the mouldy abode of the men and their belongings. An ugly mass of decaying brick buildings, with all the aged boats of the locality rotting outside in the grass-grown yards, represents what were once flourishing, though odorous, cement works.

A new industry looms in the future, which may convert Hamble into a flourishing market. Strawberries grow better hereabouts than anywhere in England; from Warsash to Sarisbury, from Bursledon to Titchfield, acres and acres of warm, light, rich soil, lying on sunny slopes, are covered with strawberries, only awaiting a speedier means of transmission to the great centres than is at present afforded. A dream of the future converts the thrown-up cement works at Warsash into a great jam factory, with the raw material growing at their very doors. On the port hand going in, a row of grey, weather-bleached piles, after the fashion of the dykes in Holland, act as a breakwater, and prevent the incursions of the sea, otherwise, the lonely, picturesque, but crazy old cottage at the Salterns, with bent grass and rush growing among the sand right up to the wooden paling, would be swept away at every spring tide. Hamble folks aver that one of Henry the Eighth's circular forts, for the building of which he seems to have had a craze, was formerly to be made out on this point. A curious collection of old yachts, and craft of every description, lie thickly clustered together, deep sunk in the mud under the cottage windows. Many crack cutters are laid up here for the winter, safe from the violence of the waves, and yet easily accessible to their skippers or care-takers in the village. The population of Hamble and Warsash is purely seafaring; the children are nearly amphibious, and, though mostly unable to swim, are so clever in boats, that a fatal accident rarely occurs. It is curious how few yacht sailors can swim, but the secret lies in the detestation generally felt by working people for cold water. A time never arrives when the little ones can paddle about with delight at

Hamble, the mud lining both shores being a stout barrier to anything but mud-larking. In summer time five or six yachts, several flying the white ensign and burgee of the Royal Yacht Squadron, are often lying in the river opposite Warsash, not to speak of hook-nose racers, wonderful two and a half tonners, with twice their weight of lead in their keel, small cutters with remarkably taunt masts, steam-launches, and home-made fishing and pleasure boats.

Moorings of every size, from the good, stout, well-found ground tackle, used by Colonel Dugmore for the long line of fine vessels he has owned, to the small toy barrel that marks the "Tubbic," or her successor's place, lie thick in the roadstead; on a fine day, something to hold on by may generally be picked up, otherwise a berth further up the river is advisable, clear of all mooring chains. At Warsash the old coast-guard mortar vessel is turned into a peaceful "Crab and Lobster Palace," connected with the shore by a wooden staircase. Here, excellent crabs and lobsters may be partaken of, representing the great industry of Hamble.

The church near Warsash, built, with the schools, by the late Mr. Hornby, is some little distance on the way to the Hook. One little hostelry, the "Crab Tea and Sun Hotel," two or three houses, and a few rows of cottages, together with Warsash House, the charming summer home of Mr. Algernon Sartoris, who is married to beautiful Nellie Grant, the great President's daughter, comprise the whole village.

From the "rode where greate shippes lie," part of the ancient Manor House of Hamble, owned by Colonel Dugmore, is visible; a yacht or two laid up in the mud in the foreground; Aylings' cottage, extremely picturesque at high-water, surrounded on two sides by the tide, and a pretty lane crowned by a group of fine elms. Further up the river, several little inns suggest the thirsty nature of Hamble; a row of shabby yachts and pilot-boats lie aground in the mud, pointing their bowsprit right up the primitive little street. Two dwellings, a boatbuilding-yard, and a good Hard, stretch away up the river on the left bank. Landing at the Hard, opposite Captain Hughes' house—the landing good at all times of tide—a steep, narrow lane leads on to the common and village green. Beneath a clump of fine old elms, some kindly hand has hung swings for the children of the poor.

Hamble is rich in nice old houses, notably the Manor House, with its charming garden sloping down to the river, and Hamble House, one of the sweetest and most comfortable of old-fashioned houses, surrounded with beautiful, well-kept grounds.

Through many a quiet lane, over the common, skirting the shore, and across the fields, most charming rambles can be taken, as yet unspoiled by the speculative builder. Happily, there is "nothing to see" in this sweet, homely nook, so the irrepressible tourist lingers not, but departs to more congenial pastures. A curious, narrow, little Norman church, opposite Hamble House, not visible from the anchorage, has a fine porch, and some interesting tablets, especially one to the memory of Captain Sir Joseph Yorke, R.N., whose galley was struck by a solitary flash of lightning when returning from his ship at Spithead to Hamble, his blackened corpse, entangled in a boat-cloak, being afterwards washed on shore near Hill Head. Sydney Lodge, built by his son, the late Earl of Hardwicke, is about a mile from the village, on the way to the new railway-station at Netley.

There is a ferry-boat and small shelter between Warsash and Hamble, but scarcely any traffic. Large oyster-docks, with the tide flowing in and out, contain cargoes of oysters, brought from the North Sea in crazy old vessels, and stored here; also square wooden boxes, floating deep in the water, receive the lobsters brought from the Devon and Cornish coast, for both of which an excellent market is always to be had at Southampton and Portsmouth. When ascending the river towards Bursledon and Botley—both well worth a visit—we can see Holly Hill, embowered in fine old trees, the property successively of Admiral Maxse and Mr. Quinten Hogg, which acquired an unlucky reputation from having been three times burned down; it has now been bought, as a shell, by Sir Edward Walter, the philanthropic founder of the corps of Commissionaires, and re-named Sarisbury Court. It bids fair, when restored and roofed, to become once more a charming home, with lovely, romantic grounds, and well-cared-for gardens. But by far the loveliest portion of the Holly Hill domain has been acquired by Mr. Forster, of Stubbington, where another beautiful home can be created among the waterfalls, glades, and still, rocky pools. Several

sharp bends in the river double and turn, obscuring the beautiful village of Bursledon, till it flashes into view; the mellow-toned, deep-roofed houses, tan-sail fishing boats, and heavy-laden coal-barges lying peacefully and safely alongside each other in this quiet haven, far from the turmoil of City wharves and creaking cranes, is a picture of still life dear to any lover of Nature.

It is hard to believe that in William and Mary's reign large men-of-war, including two eighty-gun ships, whose tonnage could not have been less than eighteen hundred tons, were built here at Bursledon; but where the ship-yard was situated that turned out vessels of such great size, seems quite unknown. However, it is certain that the whole river has silted up very considerably since the days when sea-going craft, be they Jutes, Danes, or English, could have reached Botley, even at the top of spring tides. The railway-bridge crosses the river above Bursledon, and sadly disturbs the picturesque repose of this secluded spot.

A visit to the strawberry-fields at Sarisbury had long been projected; so, leaving the yacht at anchor, in company with three una-boats and a steam-launch, we landed close to old Bursledon bridge, on the right bank, and after a pleasant, though somewhat warm walk, skirting the pretty grounds of Brooklands, formerly the property of Mr. Spencer-Smith, discovered the strawberry-fields all around Sarisbury Green. Opening a five-barred gate, close to the nice, cheery little inn, we walked through field after field of splendid strawberries, the whole air scented with rich, delicious perfume. They were growing luxuriantly, in long, straight rows, a little raised from the level, the soil, a light, brown, friable loam, seeming exactly to suit them. Each row was carefully protected from rain and dirt, by straw, hay, and dried seaweed. Gangs of women and girls, very clean and respectable looking, with faces browned by the summer sun, were briskly occupied in gathering the ripe fruit, to which end there appeared to be no royal road, it being at best a most fatiguing employment. About tenpence a basket was the then current price, varying often from day to day, according to the demand, supply, and prospects of rain. A shanty was erected in the middle of each field, to house and shade the gathered fruit, and a new station, on the Botley and Fareham Railway, has been

quite recently opened close by, for the express purpose of conveying the Sarisbury strawberries direct to market without any transhipment. To be worth the heavy carriage they must not be over-ripe, must be very carefully picked, and lightly packed in small baskets.

Embarking again from the Hard in front of Brooklands, and first depositing our spoils on board, except one basket for present use, we pulled in the Kelpie, close in to where the remains of the Danish galley before mentioned are lying; the tide being high, nothing was visible, so on we went to Botley, two miles and more up the river, sweeping by reed-banks and tall bulrushes, with willows of great size hanging and waving over the stream, past Mr. Trench's charming home, till an end came to navigation beside the steep, old, stone bridge. Botley is a dear old town, partially awakened by the railway from Southampton to Fareham; but quite unspoiled as yet, and one of the best specimens to be found of an old Hampshire county town.

MEAD AND SACK.

THERE is no subject of more interest to the average man than that which concerns eating and drinking, and thus it is that the returning traveller from strange regions is always expected to give a full account of his dietetic experiences. And so, in studies of the past, one is naturally desirous of gaining some clear conception of the kind of meat and drink with which our ancestors sustained and regaled themselves. The frequent mention of mead and sack in history, and in tales of the past, has raised many curious conjectures; and we propose to enquire into the real nature of these beverages, as we have recently done with the history of beer.

Mead is, by some of the old writers, spelt meath, and is supposed to be the same as metheglin. The Anglo-Saxon "Medo," no doubt, is our mead, which also appears in Danish as meede, in Swedish as mjoed, and in German as met. The word is believed by some philologists to be of Polish origin, because in Poland is found a species of honey called miod. This, however, is on the assumption that the word mead was always at first applied to a drink made from honey, and that is by

no means certain. The mead referred to by Chaucer in "The Miller's Tale":

He sent hir pinnes, meth and spiced ale
And wafers piping hot out of the gled,

was probably such a decoction. But something different was surely implied in Drayton's and similar references:

And having now the hand to write thy glorious
praise,
Fill me a bowl of meath, my working spirit to
raise.

Milton's idea of mead is also clearly of some species of fermented wine; as, for instance, in "Paradise Lost," Book v.:

For drink, the grape

She crushes, inoffensive moust and meathes
From many a berry.

Now if mead was always made from honey, why should Eve be pictured as gathering berries to make it? An old English writer, indeed — Somner — says Moethe is "wine made of new wine, sod until half be boyled away," but whether this Moethe was, or was not, the same thing as mead, is not quite clear.

Metheglin is the English form of the Welsh Meddyglyn, and Meddyglyn is a drink made in Wales out of wine and honey boiled together. Harrison, in his "Description of England," says that the Welshmen held this brew in the highest esteem, and "make no lesse accompt—and not without cause if it be well handled—than the Greeks did of their ambrosia, or nectar." Or than the Perthshire Highlanders do of "Athole Brose," which is a mixture of whisky and honey.

The use of honey in the manufacture of beverages has been very widespread. Thus in Boyle's "Natural Philosophy," we are told that "In divers parts of Muscovy and some other Northern regions, the common drink is hydromel, made of water, fermented with honey." Aristotle speaks of a wine made from honey in Illyria, prepared by boiling the combs in water down to half their original bulk. This wine was said to be rich and full-bodied, and it kept to a great age.

This hydromel is, doubtless, the meletites mentioned by Dioscorides as in use among both Greeks and Romans, and as possessing some peculiar medicinal virtues.

Now, were hydromel and metheglin the same thing, and how is either to be identified with mead?

This is what Holinshed proceeds to say after describing metheglin as the ambrosial drink of Welshmen: "There is a kind of swish-swash made also in Essex and diverse

other places, with honiecombs and water, which the homelie countrie wives, putting some pepper and a little spice among, call mead, verie good in my opinion for such as love to be loose-bodied at large, or a little eased of the cough, otherwise it differeth so much from the true metheglin as chalk from cheese. Truely it—hydromel—is nothing else but the washings of the combes, when the honey is wrung out, and one of the best things that I know belonging thereto is, that they spend but little labour and less cash in making of the same, and therefore no great loss if it were never occupied."

This is a sad come down from the fine old crusted vintage of Aristotle's and Pliny's descriptions, but is more like probability.

In truth, there must have been two sorts of hydromel and of metheglin—a fermented and an unfermented kind. The hydromel which Holinshed so contemptuously mentions, was evidently unfermented, and the hydromel of the Greeks seems to have been the fermented metheglin of the Welsh, which secured Holinshed's approbation. It was probably the fermented hydromel which was the Medus and Medo of the Middle Ages.

The popularity of mead seems to have been greatest among the Celtic nations; and one is inclined to regard the favourite beverage of the Vikings as something more heady than the "rich, full-bodied" wine of Aristotle, and the "swish-swash" of Holinshed. Yet it must have had something to do with honey, to judge from the famous "Mead Song," by Taliesin, which, as translated by Sharon Turner, runs:

That Maelgwn of Mona be inspired with mead
and cheer us with it,
From the mead-horns, foaming, pure, and shining
liquor
Which the bees provide, but do not enjoy.
Mead distilled I praise; its eulogy is everywhere
Precious to the creature whom the earth maintains.
God made it to man for his happiness;
The fierce and the mute both enjoy it.

That curious old writer, Venner, in his "Via Recta ad Vitam Longam," published about 1650, institutes a close enquiry into the wholesomeness of both metheglin and mead, or meath. Metheglin, he says, is "A very strong kinde of drinke, made of three or four parts of water and one of honey boyled together, and scummed very cleane;" but it is to be improved by the addition of ginger, and rosemary, with other herbs. As to mead, he says: "Meath, or mede, is like to metheglin; the chiefest difference is that it is not so

hot in operation ; for meath is made of one part of honey and six times so much pure water, or more." Both drinks are referred to as "in common use among us"; and frequent references to metheglin are to be found in the old English dramatists.

Doctors differ, however, and Brande and Cox give a different prescription in their "Dictionary of Science, etc." They say that mead is a vinous liquor made by dissolving one part of honey in three of boiling water, flavouring it with spices, and adding a portion of ground malt, and a piece of toast dipped in yeast ; the whole being suffered to ferment. The Scandinavian mead, they say, is flavoured with primrose blossoms ; and certainly one would not have been disposed to credit the rough old Vikings with such a delicate taste as this flavouring implies.

Metheglin the same writers define as a beverage made of honey and water, fermented by the addition of yeast ; but they do not state the proportions.

In the feasts of Saga-time, the Vikings seem to have drunk both beer and mead, and great quantities of both. Although mead is constantly mentioned in the Sagas, it is not probable that it was in such extensive use as beer ; and it may have been reserved for the high revels of the Vikings.

Of a later and even more special literary association is sack, which figures so largely in mediæval literature, and which is especially familiar to all students of Shakespeare. And yet its character and antecedents are hardly more clear than are those of mead. The word sack has not always meant the same thing, however it came originally to be employed. Still it is a little more definite than the ambrosia and the nectar of the Grecian heroes, and it is worth while summing up what can be learned, or surmised about it.

Sack is generally supposed to have been sherry, but in truth it seems to have been applied to a variety of wines and drinks. The "good sherris sack" of Falstaff, in which the worthy knight found a "two-fold operation," as well as proof of the roguery of villainous man, when he discovered lime in his favourite cup, was probably the wine of Xeres. Yet it is surprising that the knight could have drunk so much as two gallons of this liquor—even more, for there was "Sack after supper"—as evidenced in the famous tavern-bill, which included the charge of one halfpenny

for bread. Two gallons is equal to about one dozen bottles, and not even the four-bottle men of the Regency could have compassed such a big drink as that.

Minshew's Spanish Dictionary describes Xeres as an Andalusian wine, made near Cadiz, of which the English name is "Xeres Sack." And the commentators of Shakespeare usually take for granted that Falstaff's drink was sherry. But none of them seems to have considered how physically impossible it was for one single individual to have consumed the quantity of sherry charged to Falstaff, if his sack was anything like our modern sherry.

This is the two-fold operation he claimed for his beloved drink : "It ascends me into the brain ; dries me there all the foolish, and dull, and cruddy vapours which environ it ; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery and delectable shapes ; which, delivered o'er to the voice which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is, the warming of the blood ; which before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice ; but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme." And so on, ending with the denunciation of "thin potations," and the commanding of every one to addict themselves to good, fertile, sherris sack.

There is no accounting for the tastes of those who drink for the sake of drinking ; but Falstaff was not a sort of that description. He drank for good cheer, not to make himself drunk. And sherry, such as is now known, consumed in the quantities which he consumed, would have precisely the opposite effect on the liver ; in fact, sherry-drinking is generally believed to be exceedingly bad for the liver. With all respect, then, to Shakespeare and his commentators, we are unable to believe that Falstaff could, or would, or did consume at, and after supper, a dozen and a half of wine such as is now sold under the name of sherry.

That sack was a Spanish wine, however, is proved by many evidences. Thus, in the "Ordinances of the Household of King James the First," published by the Society of Antiquaries, there is a distinct reference to "Spanish wines called Sack." Drake says it was sweet, but of different kinds. If a sweet wine, then we can understand Wycherley's simile, "Wine and women, good apart, together, are as nauseous as

sack and sugar." We have read somewhere that "Sack and ginger" was a favourite beverage in the seventeenth century; but that may probably have been only some kind of ginger-wine.

Let us see what light old Venner can throw on the subject. He says at one place that, "Sack is completely hot, and of thin parts"; and in another that, "Some affect to drink sack with sugar"—in spite of Wycherley!—"and some without, and upon no other good ground, as I think, but that as it is best pleasing to their palates"—and a very good ground, too.

But, he adds: "What I have spoken of mixing sugar with sack must be understood of 'Sherrie Sack,' for to mix sugar with other wines that in a common appellation are called sack, and are sweeter in taste, makes it unpleasant to the palate, and fulsome to the stomach. And, therefore, what I have written of sack in general, is chiefly to be understood of sherrie sack."

Venner also speaks of Malaga sack, and also mentions Canary wine as sometimes termed a sack, although differing from the true sherrie sack.

In Ben Jonson's works, sherry and sack are treated as two different things. Jonson has also this epigram:

What can the cause be when the King hath given
His poest sack, the household will not pay?
Are they so scant in their store? or driven
For want of knowing the poest to say him nay?

Here we seem to have rather a suggestion of the butt of wine with which the Laureate is rewarded even to this day, than of the ignominious dismissal associated with "sack" in modern slang. Jonson's lines, however, are suggestively funny.

We have come across a passage in Beaumont which may be taken in connection with Venner's reference to "Canarie wine":

Let me rejoice in sprightly sack, that can
Create a braine even in an empty pan.
Canary! it's thee that dost inspire
And actuete the soule with heavenly fire.

Here the poet is not in agreement with the physiologist; he clearly regards Canary as the most desirable and delectable sack.

We are inclined to believe that Falstaff's sack was a light, natural—i.e. unmedicated—Spanish wine, and probably of a "dry" character. In fact, the word sack is commonly supposed to be from the French "sec," and thus was applied literally and properly to dry sherry. This theory is supported by the allusions to sugar, which shows that some people did not like their

wine "dry," and preferred to sweeten it artificially.

Against this, however, we have to set the fact that at one time sack was a term undoubtedly applied in a general way to all kinds of sweet wines. If the word was really derived from the French "sec," then we find a most absurd contradiction in terms; so absurd that it drives one to seek another explanation. It may be found, perhaps, in the statement that the Spaniards used to have, whatever may be the practice nowadays, the habit of carrying their sweet wines from place to place, before they were casked or bottled, in goat skins—literally in leather sacks. We should then conclude that sack was a natural wine, as made by the peasants of Andalusia and the Canary Islands, and that it varied much in sweetness and dryness. But we confess there is a deal of uncertainty about the whole matter.

SHAM SOVEREIGNS.

THOUGH an uneasy pillow—according to the poet—is reserved for the head that wears a crown, the brilliancy of the latter ornament has tempted many an adventurer into desperate efforts to secure it, undeterred by the "malaise" of the accompanying pillow. For this purpose all the resources of human ingenuity have been exhausted. Great wars have been waged; fertile countries laid waste with fire and sword; political intrigues have caught their scores of victims in subtly-woven webs; fraud and force have been unscrupulously employed. Perhaps of all the "ways and means" adopted by ambition, the craftiest has been the personation of some actual and legitimate Monarch who has passed away from the scene under doubtful conditions—in a cloud, like the Homeric deities—leaving his crown to be picked up by the first comer. Yes; the names of not a few "Claimants" are recorded in the annals of Royalty, as well as in the chronicles of Newgate. There have been sham Sovereigns as well as would-be baronets; and, perhaps, it will not be uninteresting if we glance at some of the most notorious of these—more or less—cunning impostors.

I will not say with Macaulay that any schoolboy—but certainly most schoolboys—will remember the story in Herodotus of the Magian who availed himself of his strong likeness to Smerdis—whom his

brother Cambyses had ordered to be put to death—to take possession of the throne of Persia. The aforesaid schoolboys will remember that Cambyses had deprived all the Magians of his empire of their ears; and that the impostor was eventually detected through his folly in permitting his wife to discover his earless condition. It does not seem very wife-like conduct; but she made known her discovery to the Persian nobles, who proceeded to effect her divorce by the simple expedient of putting her husband to death.

In the second century before Christ, the citizens of Antioch revolted—not without cause—against Demetrius Soter, King of Syria, and being supported by the Kings of Egypt and Cappadocia, they put forward one Bela, a low-born youth, as the lawful heir to the Syrian Crown. He assumed the victorious name of Alexander, and pretended to be the son of King Antiochus. In his first battle he was beaten, but in his second he was successful. Our sham Sovereign reigned for four years, and was then conquered and dethroned by the son of Demetrius. Later, he was assassinated by an Arab chief.

The son of Demetrius Soter—Demetrius Nicator, by name—was comfortably enthroned when Ptolemaeus Physcon, King of Egypt, against whom he had declared war, sent a young Egyptian, the son of a merchant, to reclaim the kingdom, on the pretence that he had been adopted by Antiochus. The Syrians were so weary of the extortions and tyranny of Nicator that they gave a cordial welcome to this pretender, and helped him to dethrone his rival, who was killed at Tyre, whither he had fled for an asylum. Four years afterwards, the pretender was himself dethroned by the son of Nicator, Antiochus Gryphus, who put him to death.

The Roman Emperors were frequently called upon to contend with impostors. Augustus was at one time opposed by a man who asserted that he was the son of Octavia, the Emperor's sister; at another, by one who aimed at the throne of Cappadocia, who assumed the name of Ariarathus, its king, who, however, had been slain by Mark Antony. This sham Ariarathus obtained a very wide and enthusiastic support; for not less remarkable than the audacious impudence of these pretenders, is the credulity of their adherents.

The story of the false Agrippa is sufficiently curious.

Marcus Julius Agrippa, surnamed Posthumus, son of Agrippa and Julia, after having been adopted by Augustus, was banished, through the intrigues of Livia, to the Island of Phanaea. When Tiberius succeeded to the Imperial throne, his first care was to disembarass himself of so formidable a competitor, and he despatched a trusty tribune to assassinate him. There is no room to doubt that the man faithfully fulfilled his errand. This was before the death of Augustus became publicly known. As soon as the news was spread abroad, one of Agrippa's slaves, Clemens by name, resolved to proceed to Phanaea, carry off Agrippa by force or strategem, and conduct him to the Roman legions in Germany, who would gladly have received their beloved chief. The bold design was baffled by the slow sailing of the ship which carried Clemens. Before he could reach the island, Agrippa perished. Clemens then conceived a more daring project. Gaining possession of Agrippa's ashes, he sailed for Cosa, a promontory of Etruria, and concealed himself in its remote and unknown recesses. There he allowed his hair and beard to grow; in age and features he already resembled his master. Some skilful agents, whom he had attached to his fortunes, set on foot a report that Agrippa was still alive. It was quickly caught up by the orderless, the restless, and adventurous, and by those bold spirits which hope out of a revolution to carve their fortunes. At length it reached Rome, where it created a great stir and found many believers; so that by the time the impostor reached Ostia, he found himself at the head of a considerable force. Greatly disturbed, Tiberius placed the affair in the hands of Crispus Sallustius, who picked out a couple of soldiers, whom he could trust, and instructed them to seek Clemens, to assure him of their devotion, and to place their money and themselves at his disposal. They carried out these instructions faithfully, and one night, when Clemens was off his guard, they put him in irons, and with the assistance of a sufficient force, carried him to the Imperial palace. Said Tiberius: "How didst thou become Agrippa?" The slave replied: "Just as thou becamest Caesar." No tortures could compel him to reveal the names of his accomplices; and as Tiberius durst not send him to the public scaffold, he was secretly murdered within the palace precincts.

The history of the Byzantine or Eastern Empire is full of sanguinary tragedies, caused by the attempts of these sham Sovereigns.

Phocas, in 602, made himself master of the Imperial throne by the murder of the Emperor Maurice and five of his sons. They were summarily slain before the eyes of their agonised parent, who at each stroke found strength to utter a pious ejaculation : "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgements are righteous!" The tragic scene was finally closed by the execution of the Emperor himself. But all this bloodshed brought no peace to the mind of the usurper so long as the Emperor's eldest son, Theodosius, was alive. He had taken refuge in the Church of Saint Antoninus, at some distance from Constantinople ; but one of the officers of Phocas dragged him from his sanctuary and cut off his head on the sea-shore, where his father and brothers had previously lost their lives. However, it was soon noised abroad that not Theodosius, but a substitute who closely resembled him, had perished ; that Theodosius had miraculously escaped, and had wandered over several Eastern lands. This phantom—as Gibbon says—disturbed the usurper's repose. "A whisper was circulated through the East that the son of Maurice was still alive ; the people expected their avenger, and the widow and officers of the late Emperor would have adopted, as their son and brother, the vilest of mankind."

In 821—a year after the assassination of the Emperor Leo the Fifth had placed Michael the Stammerer on the throne—a certain man, of low and obscure birth, named Thomas, gave himself out to be the son of the Emperor Irene, assumed the name of Constantine, and set out in quest of a throne at the head of a crowd of deluded partisans. Having been repulsed from Constantinople by its inhabitants, he marched into Thrace. Michael, at the head of a large army, rapidly followed him up, and, having surrounded his camp, took him prisoner, and, after cutting off his arms and legs, hung him.

It will be seen that these sham Sovereigns generally came to a violent end ; yet none of them were discouraged by the fate of their predecessors. In 902, Constantine Ducas, son of Andronicus Ducas, having risen in revolt against Constantine Porphyrogenitus (born in the purple) perished in his attack upon the Imperial palace.

Nevertheless, a few years later, an imposter, a Macedonian, whose real name was Basil, called himself Constantine Ducas, and was gathering adherents, when the Imperial troops surprised him and conveyed him to Constantinople, where he was condemned to lose his right hand. Retiring to Apsicon, he caused a hand of bronze to be made, and, having accustomed himself to hold his sword with it, again entered on his ambitious career, and contrived to persuade thousands into a belief that he was really the Prince he professed to be. The insurrection spread rapidly ; but the Imperial army, arriving on the scene, soon scattered his undisciplined forces. The sham Constantine was taken prisoner and conducted to Constantinople, where he was first scourged and afterwards burnt.

I have not yet closed this strange chapter of Byzantine history. The next imposture took place under somewhat novel circumstances. Michael the Seventh, surnamed Parapinaces, dethroned in 1078, and confined in the monastery of Studa, eventually became Archbishop of Ephesus. Nicephorus Botoniates, who had succeeded him, had been in his turn dethroned by Alexius Comnenus, in 1081, when the famous Norman adventurer, Robert Guiscard, whose daughter was to have married Constantine, the son of the Emperor Michael, resolved on invading the Greek empire, towards which his ambition had long been directed. To assist him in his enterprise, he sought out a person bearing some degree of facial and other resemblance to Michael, and found the man he wanted in a monk of Crotona. His fellow-monks entered into the plot, and formally addressed a petition to Robert, couched in these words : "Michael, your ally, having been driven from his dominions, is on his way to implore your help." Robert showed this missive to his wife and nobles, who immediately declared that he was bound in honour to protect his unfortunate ally. The fictitious Michael soon afterwards made his appearance at Salerno, was heartily welcomed by Duke Robert, and adorned with the pomp and circumstance of the Imperial dignity. In a triumphal progress through Calabria and Apulia, he was saluted with the tears and acclamations of the people ; while the Pope exhorted the bishops to preach, and the Catholics to fight in the pious work of his restoration. His conversations with the Duke were numerous, and on the most confidential

terms ; and the promises they made to each other were justified "by the valour of the Normans, and the treasures of the East." Yet he was but a sham Sovereign after all ! He paid the penalty of his fraud, however, with his life, falling in the great battle which Duke Robert fought under the walls of Durazzo, in 1081.

The sanguinary catastrophes which, in the closing years of the twelfth century, branded with blood each miserable page of Byzantine history, encouraged the repetition of these impostures ; and it is scarcely an extravagance to say that the sham Sovereigns were almost as numerous as the real. Thus, in 1193, a young man came forward as Alexius the Second—son of the Emperor Manuel Comnenus—who had been deposed and killed eleven years before. He imitated, "*à merveille*," the stammering, and wore the fair locks, of the deceased Prince, playing his part with great courage and address. He made his first appearance in the towns which nestle on the banks of the classic Meander. At Annala he discovered himself—or, rather, his fictitious self—to a Latin with whom he lodged, explaining that the Emperor Andronicus had ordered him to be thrown into the sea, but that he had been saved by the compassion of the officers charged with the execution of the cruel mandate. His host believed in him, and accompanied him to Iconium, where he introduced him to the Sultan Azz-Eddin, whom he addressed with all the authority of his supposed title and rank, even venturing to reproach him with his indifference to the sufferings of the son of an emperor who had been his friend and ally. Deceived by his personal likeness to the real Alexius—one of those strange resemblances which are more common than people think—and impressed by his cool audacity, the Sultan made him a good many presents, and more promises. One day, when the pretender was boasting of his Imperial descent, unrestrained by the presence of the Greek ambassador, the Sultan put the question to the latter :

"Can you say of your own knowledge whether the man before us is really the person he claims to be ?"

"It is beyond doubt," replied the ambassador, "that my lord and master, Alexius the Second, was drowned."

At this the impostor broke out into a storm of passion, and would have struck the ambassador in the face, had not the Sultan interposed. Ultimately, the Sultan

gave him permission to raise soldiers in his territories ; and speedily collecting an army of eight thousand men, he captured and plundered several towns upon the Meander. His depredations generally falling upon those where stores of grain were collected, he obtained the sobriquet of "The Barn-Burner."

The restless and discontented spirit which prevailed throughout the empire favoured at first his ambitious projects. The Imperial Generals sent against him durst not deliver battle, because they could not trust their troops, who deserted in large numbers to the pretender's standard. His progress resembled, therefore, a triumphal march ; and the success of his adventure was far from doubtful, when his career came to a sudden termination. In a fit of intoxication he insulted a Greek priest, who snatched from him his Imperial sword, and struck him dead. Violent courses, one sees, have generally violent ends.

In the space of a few years there sprang up a plentiful crop of false Alexiuses, who all met with the same unhappy fate.

The Ottoman Princes, who succeeded in the fifteenth century to the throne of the Greek Emperors, were troubled like them by the plots of claimants. That Bajazet the First was conquered and taken prisoner by the mighty Timúr, or Tamerlane, at the Battle of Ancyra, in 1402, everybody knows. In the stress of the conflict his son, Mustapha, disappeared. His dead body could not be recognised on the battlefield, and he was never seen again. About sixteen years later, in the reign of Mahomet the First, a younger son of Bajazet appeared in Wallachia, an adventurer, whom all the Turkish historians call Döesme Mustapha (the sham Mustapha), and claimed the throne as Mahomet's elder brother. Now, Byzantine writers unanimously support his claim ; but, as Von Hammer remarks, neither they nor the Turks can be accepted as impartial witnesses, for the latter adopting the cause of the reigning Sultan, and recognising him as the only legitimate successor of Bajazet, set aside the rights of the elder brothers whom he conquered, and consequently treat Mustapha as an impostor ; whereas, the Byzantine historians come to an opposite conclusion, because it suited Greek policy to see in him the true and lawful heir.

On a careful review of the evidence I am not at all sure that I am justified in

including him among the sham Sovereigns. As large an element of doubt mingles in his case as in that of our own Perkin Warbeck. Though Tamerlane instituted the closest possible search on the field of battle, the Prince's body could not be found. Again, Mahomet was so alarmed by the pretensions of the claimant that he undertook to pay the Greek Emperor a large annual sum to detain him in safe keeping. Thirdly, he secured not only the support of the populace, but of many of the great magnates of the empire; and, lastly, the venerable Neschri, an important authority, positively asserted that he was the man he said he was. However, real Prince or sham, this Mustapha proved a dangerous competitor, and cost Mahomet many an anxious hour. He defeated him at Thessalonica, but he made his escape, and found an asylum at the court of the Emperor Manuel, who kept him in honourable captivity until his death.

There was another Mustapha in the middle of the sixteenth century, who pretended to be the son of Soliman the Sixth, and ended his brief dream of ambition on the gibbet. A pretended son of Mahomet the Fourth, in 1708, lost his head.

On September the seventh, 1154, Alphonso the Fighter, King of Aragon, was defeated at Fraga by the Moors. As his body was never found, busy tongues began to whisper that he was not dead, but, overwhelmed by misfortune, had secretly set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Twenty-eight years passed, and lo, the missing Sovereign returned! The man who personated him gave out that he had escaped from the lost battle-field, and had contrived to make his way—enduring many trials and privations—to the Holy Land, where he had fought in all the wars of the Christians against the Pagans. He brought no witness to confirm his story; but it found numerous believers; and the would-be Alphonso was collecting a considerable force when he was captured and put to death at Saragossa.

A similar incident is found in the history of Portugal. As it has been made the foundation of a romance by Miss Porter, and a play by Dryden, it is probably well known to English readers. Don Sebastian, who ascended the Portuguese throne in 1557, was a prince of great capacity and ambition, and thirsted to restore the ancient glory of his kingdom. The internal discords of the Empire of Morocco seemed to offer a favourable opportunity for securing its African territories. With

an army of sixteen thousand men, and attended by the flower of his nobility, he sailed from Lisbon in June, 1579. But on landing on the Marocco coast, he was disappointed in a promised Moorish contingent, and at Alcazuquivir, on the 7th of August, was confronted by a greatly superior force under the Sultan, Abdul-Malik. He fought with heroic courage, and displayed no inconsiderable military skill, but his small army was completely crushed, and he himself, fleeing with only three attendants, was killed by some Moorish stragglers.

His great uncle, the Cardinal Henry, succeeded him, but reigned only two years, when the crowns of Portugal and Spain were united in the person of Philip the Second. As the son of Isabella, sister of John the Second, his rights were incontestable; they were disputed, however, by two impostors who appeared almost simultaneously—in 1585. One was the son of a potter of Atrasova; the other of a stone-cutter in the Island of Terceira. The popular legend represented Sebastian as living in privation in the solitude of a desert; both pretenders, therefore, wore the dress of a hermit. The Atrasova adventurer was accompanied by a pseudobishop, who recommended "King Sebastian" to the charity of his subjects. He received a few alms from ignorant and credulous peasants, but his enterprise never assumed any formidable proportions. His apprehension was effected without the slightest difficulty, and he and his accomplice were sent to Lisbon. The latter, for desecrating the episcopal character, was hung; the sham King was sent to the galleys.

The other pretender, Alvarez by name, behaved with infinitely more address. As he bore a strong likeness to the unfortunate Sebastian, he gained new partisans every day; but to them he said, with an air of bonhomie, which confirmed their credulity, that they were mistaken in him, and that he was only the son of a poor and obscure stone-cutter. As, meanwhile, he led a life of the greatest austerity, his admirers set down his denial to his singular humility, which led him to avoid recognition. When he saw that this stratagem had succeeded, he entered upon another. He rose frequently at midnight, and prayed fervently to Heaven in a voice which he took care should be loud enough to be heard by listening ears: "O my God, grant that I may be able to discover myself to my subjects, and regain

the kingdom of my ancestors." This rude artifice proved entirely successful; his secret was made known to everybody; and with tears of joy crowds flocked to pay their homage to their recovered Sovereign. But when the Viceroy of Portugal, the Arch-duke Albert, sent against him a military force, the rabble dispersed at the first encounter. The pretender attempted to escape, but was overtaken, conveyed to Lisbon, judged, condemned, and executed.

Twelve or thirteen years passed by without further question of Sebastian. Then, in 1598, a third appeared at Venice, whose identity has neither been well established nor satisfactorily refuted. It remains, in fact, among the puzzles of history. One thing, at least, is certain: that all the Portuguese in Venice, who had known King Sebastian, declared in favour of this mysterious personage. When brought before a tribunal, appointed by the Venetian Government to investigate the affair, he solemnly asserted that he was the long-missing Sovereign; and his voice, his features, his face seemed to confirm his statement. He said that the Moors, who had taken him prisoner, failed to recognise him; and related his adventures with an air of simple gravity that impressed his hearers with conviction.

He showed certain physical marks identical with those which were known to have been on the King's person; he spoke to the members of the senate of secret details which its ambassadors had communicated to the King alone. His answers were so clear and precise, that the judges set him at liberty; but Phillip the Second's envoy demanded that he should be expelled from Venice. At Florence he was arrested by Spanish officials, and conveyed to Naples, where they exposed him to the insults of the populace; then shaved off his hair, and sent him to the galleys. But Phillip feared him still; he ordered him to be brought to Spain, and threw him into prison, where he died, it is said, of poison. Several historians, including Herrera, acknowledge that the Portuguese persisted in regarding Philip's victim as the true Sebastian.

My next example shall be taken from Muscovite annals. The Czar Feodor Ivanovitch, having ascended the throne of Russia in 1584, his brother-in-law, Boritz Godonov, speedily got all the power of the State into his own hands, and rid himself of the Czar's councillors, by sending them into exile, or condemning them to the

scaffold. The Czar dying without issue in 1598, he contrived to occupy the vacant throne. Some time before he had put to death, under the following circumstances, Ivan's younger brother and heir, Dmitri or Demetrius. Thus runs the story:

He had observed, says De Thou, that when the great bell of Moscow tolled, as was usual when a conflagration broke out among its timber-built houses, the young Prince always issued forth to watch the people on their way to extinguish the flames. He concluded that it would be very easy for his agents to despatch him in the crowd, and took his measures accordingly; and at the first alarm of fire, Demetrius was stabbed as he descended the stairs from his apartment. Many who were present at this tragic scene, and afterwards stated its particulars, agree in positively affirming that the young Demetrius perished. But others give a different version of the transaction: they say that Dmitri's mother was warned by her friends of the design Boritz had on foot; that she preserved her son by substituting for him a young man of the same age, and very like him in features; that this young man was murdered in the Prince's bed, and not on the stairs; that steps were taken to ensure the safety of Dmitri; that the supposititious corpse, placed immediately on a bier lest it should be recognised, was buried without ceremony, under the direction of a German noble, Grand Marshal of the Court; and that it was immediately proclaimed that the Prince had died of the plague.

However this may be, we are told that some years afterwards there appeared, on the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy, a young man with a pock-marked face and one arm shorter than the other—two peculiarities of Prince Dmitri. He was liberal, clever, and affable, and his manners impressed strangers with a belief that he was of Royal blood. At length, he applied to the Jesuit Fathers, who exercised a considerable influence in Poland, and led them to hope that, if through their assistance he recovered the throne of his fathers, his earliest object would be to re-establish Catholicism in Muscovy and bring back that empire into the Roman obedience. At the outset all was kept secret, while communications were carried on with the Pope, who, either of his own volition or influenced by the King of Poland and his nobles, encouraged an enterprise which seemed advantageous to religion and the Holy See. The Jesuits then introduced

their protégé to George Maccinsky, Palatine of Sandovar, the most powerful noble in the kingdom ; and between them was concluded a secret treaty by which the so-called Dmitri agreed, if successful, to marry the Palatine's second daughter.

Assisted by the Palatine's money, the intrigues of the Jesuits, and the cordial friendship of King Sigismund, Dmitri soon found himself in a position to take the field with ten thousand Poles, as many Cossacks, and a park of artillery. Crossing the Borysthenes, he captured several towns in rapid succession. Boritz, at the head of a numerous army, marched against him, and in the first engagement defeated him. But in the second—March, 1605—Dmitri was the victor, and Boritz, dying suddenly of apoplexy, entered the city of Moscow on June the twenty-ninth with pomp.

To establish more securely his right to the throne, he sought out his mother—or, at all events, Dmitri's mother—who, on her son's death, had taken refuge in a small convent at a distance from the Court. A splendid escort was despatched to receive her, and he himself proceeded to meet her on the road. As soon as he caught sight of the cavalcade, he dismounted, and approached her litter with every sign of reverence. Shedding filial tears, he embraced her, and then walked by her side to the palace, bareheaded. During their interview it was observed that Dmitri's mother, either through artifice or in sincerity, responded affectionately to these marks of respect. Some authorities, I may add, attribute her emotion to her delight at being delivered from an obscure and monotonous life.

So far Dmitri—whether the real or the false—had been borne on the flowing tide. But, unfortunately, his partiality for foreigners, and particularly for Poles—though they were held to be the mortal enemies of the Muscovites—provoked the discontent both of the populace and the nobles. On the night of May the seventeenth the latter seized their arms, rushed into the streets, massacred every stranger, and attacked the Imperial palace. Awakened by the tumult, Dmitri leaped from his bedroom window; but, in falling, broke his thigh, was taken prisoner, and dragged back to his Royal hall. A boyard shouting "impostor!" dealt him a sword-blow on the head, which split it from forehead to chin. Immediately, a score of sabres

flashed around him, and, swept to the ground, he perished with countless wounds.

Such was the fate of Dmitri. Was he a sham Sovereign? Or was he really the brother of the Czar, Feodor Ivanovitch?

There can be no doubt as to the sham in my next episode of adventure.

The tragic death of Peter the Third, and the accession of his wife, Catherine the Second, in 1762, are well-known incidents. Eleven years had Catherine reigned and intrigued, when, in Little Russia, a man named Pugatschef passed himself off as the Czar Peter, to whom he bore a remarkable likeness. A crowd of the idle, the credulous, and the desperate, hastened to acknowledge him as their Sovereign; and having organised them into some resemblance to a military force, he made himself master of several fortresses in the government of Orenburg. So rapid was the growth of his fortunes, that he might easily have entered Moscow, where a powerful party was prepared to welcome him; but he hesitated—and was lost. His indecision gave Count Panin time to collect the troops and march against him. He set a large sum on the head of the impostor, who, betrayed by his own adherents, was carried to Moscow, tortured, and put to death, January the tenth, 1775.

Of these sham Sovereigns perhaps the reader has had enough. They have cropped up in all countries. Germany had its sham Henry the Fifth; France, its pseudo King John and a number of pretended Louis the Seventeenth, one of whom died as late as 1845; and England, its Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck. The latter, as I have already hinted, is a subject of "historic doubts." As the reader knows, he claimed to be Richard Duke of York, second son of Edward the Fourth, one of the princely "infants" who were generally supposed to have been murdered in the Tower by order of Richard the Third. But that they were so murdered is not absolutely proven, and that Perkin Warbeck was not one of them, must not be too readily assumed. However, he met with the usual fate of sham Sovereigns—a prison, and a scaffold. Uneasy lies the head that aims at wearing a crown that is not rightfully its own! The world has no compassion to spare upon pretenders. They play a desperate game, and if they lose, as they generally do, must be content to pay the forfeit.

